UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1994/661
3 June 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 3 JUNE 1994 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement dated 2 June 1994 by the spokesman for the General Department of Atomic Energy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) KIM Su Man
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement made on 2 June 1994 by the Spokesman for the General Department of Atomic Energy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Recently, the secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) submitted to the United Nations Security Council an incorrect report relating to the core refuelling operations at the five-megawatt experimental nuclear power plant in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (S/1994/631, annex), misrepresenting facts as if the method of the core refuelling operations employed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would offer only a slim technical possibility of the later measurement of fuel rods, and the Security Council accordingly adopted post-haste a "presidential statement" (S/PRST/1994/28).

As is known, our five-megawatt experimental nuclear power plant had no other choice than to begin the core refuelling operations from early May for technical or safety reasons.

Since we have a unique status following the temporary suspension of the effectuation of our declared withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we are not under any obligation to accept routine and ad hoc inspections under the safeguard agreement, but are obliged only to ensure inspection for the continuity of safeguard knowledge. The selection and securing of some fuel rods requested by IAEA with regard to the core refuelling operations are activities for the verification of completeness of the initial report. In the long run, this activity falls under the category of ad hoc inspection. The selection and securing of some fuel rods, therefore, can never be allowed before our unique status is removed.

However, we are carrying out the core refuelling operations in such a manner that we fully preserve the technical possibility of later measurement of such fuel rods as requested by the Agency, as a token of good faith, anticipating a removal of our unique status.

At present, the core refuelling operations and all the fuel in the transfer channel, spent fuel pond and damaged fuel dry storage are under strict containment and surveillance by the Agency. Two surveillance cameras installed by the Agency at the reactor hall where the refuelling is going on are monitoring the core area, fuel channels and equipment hatch and movements of the refuelling machine, and the IAEA spent fuel rod counter system, with a silicon semi-conductor detector, a fission chamber, an ionization chamber and a position sensor, has been installed in the spent fuel discharge channel to keep a constant measure and count of the spent fuel rods being discharged into baskets.

The Agency has planted thermal luminescence detectors and seals in all the channels that may be considered to be diversion paths and two surveillance cameras in the building of the spent fuel pond to monitor and control the flow of nuclear material.

Notably, at the time of the inspection in May, in order to make efficient use of the surveillance devices of the Agency during the refuelling, we fulfilled all the requirements requested by it, such as the replacement of computers and their parts in the spent fuel rod counter, and the installation of and uninterruptible power supply to the IAEA surveillance devices and of a lighting system for the spent fuel pond building. Thus, the non-diversion of nuclear material during the refuelling is firmly guaranteed.

This is admitted by the inspectors of the Agency now observing the whole process of refuelling. Our core refuelling operation is being done in such a manner that we preserve the technical possibility of later measurement. The fuel rods have been unloaded from the reactor core by the refuelling machine channel by channel, channel group by channel group in sequence in the reactor hall, and all the spent fuel rods from four channels have been discharged into one basket. Baskets of spent fuel are placed in their own positions in the spent fuel pond. Accounting and operating records concerning all the operations of refuelling, including the basket identification number, the channel identification number, the sequence of fuel rods in channels and the position of baskets in the pond, are being kept at the facility. The identification number of baskets and their positions in the pond are also being strictly ascertained by the Agency's inspectors now present during the refuelling operation.

This shows that the refuelling operations are now being conducted in the presence of IAEA inspectors in such a manner that we preserve the technical possibility of their future measurement. So it is possible to reconstruct the channels of the fuel rods in baskets and the sequence of rods in the channels at any time if necessary.

The channels of fuel rods and the sequence of fuel rods in them can be identified by means of the measured value of the gamma rays for the fuel rods and the calculated value of the distribution of neutron flux along the channels. This method has been fully proved through experiment under wet and dry conditions.

When this method is applied, the working amount of measurement may be slightly larger than that by the method of selecting fuel rods in the reactor core, but it is the only rational method in our present situation. It is a scientific method proposed by the operators in the spirit of cooperation, out of a sincere desire to demonstrate the transparency of our nuclear activities.

At the consultation on the refuelling held at Pyongyang a few days ago, the head of the IAEA delegation also said that the method proposed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was reasonable from the theoretical point of view and that he would study it back at the Agency and inform us of the results.

This notwithstanding, some officials of the IAEA secretariat hurriedly submitted to the Security Council a report based on their unilateral, incorrect judgement that the technical possibility of a future measurement of the fuel rods was insufficient, on 27 May when the consultations were under way and before the consultation team arrived in Vienna, not waiting for the result.

Since the Agency promised us to study our proposal after going back to Vienna, it should have given us a scientific and technical clarification. Meanwhile, the Security Council committed a very irresponsible and unfair act according to a scenario written by some member nations beforehand, claiming that the core refuelling operation must be made in accordance with the standards of the Agency, otherwise the technical possibility of later measurement of the fuel rods might be lost. Such unjustifiable behaviour on the part of the Agency secretariat and the Security Council was by no means fortuitous.

The Agency secretariat deliberately avoided being present at the refuelling, ignoring our fair proposal for its presence from the beginning, and hindered the normal operation of our nuclear facilities. When we were compelled to start the refuelling operation for technical and safety reasons, it charged that we had started the refuelling in the absence of its inspectors.

The unjustifiable pressure campaign launched against us by IAEA and some member nations of the Security Council with regard to the core refuelling operation in our country bears a close resemblance to the previous pressure campaign based on the result of the inspection in March.

It is their trite method to lay deliberate obstacles in the way of solution to the nuclear issue by unreasonably taking the "nuclear issue" of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations and internationalizing and politicizing it each time some progress is made in its solution by the sincere efforts and flexible position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The facts clearly indicate that the Agency secretariat has pursued a sinister political purpose of stifling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from the beginning according to a ready-made scenario, far from taking a stand for a solution to the "nuclear issue" of the Democratic People's Republic.

If some officials of the Agency secretariat declare that the technical possibility of the future measurement of the fuel rods is gone, we cannot but take a decisive countermeasure.

If the IAEA secretariat truly wants a solution to the "nuclear issue" of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it must not continue expanding its partiality with such unreasonable acts as hurriedly submitting a report based on an incorrect judgement to the Security Council as it did this time, but must look squarely at the situation and return to its original, fair position, as befitting an international organization.